OUR FAITH

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Purpose:--"*To diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure religion, which, in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, is summed up in love to God and love to man.*"

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Prayer

O Lord, Thou Shepherd of our lives, how good it is to throw ourselves upon Thy care. We have tried to live alone and find our own pasture, only to be bruised by the stones and torn by the thorns. If we have wandered in some wilderness this past week with tired feet and hungry heart, we come back to the fold this day. Let us rest in the consciousness of Thy care. Tired of all wandering, let us go with Thee now to walk in green pastures beside the still waters. Lead us in the paths of righteousness for Thy name's sake. And though our way be through the valley of the shadow of death, we will not fear, for Thou art with us.

Amen.

American Unitarianism

JOINT EDITORIAL

Dr. Edwin C. Broome of Belmont, Mass., published a report on American Unitarianism in the British **Inquirer** which is reprinted in the **Christian Register** (Jan.). Included in the former but omitted from the latter is a reference to "the Christian Committee, the present-day protagonists of the Unitarian "Oxford Movement." (Oct. 30, p. 350). Unitarian Christian Committee was, until the Autumn of 1947, the name of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship.

The Oxford Movement, as our readers may know, was not the "Oxford Group Movement." The Oxford Movement's tracts, published between 1833-41, advocated a belief in the apostolic succession of the episcopacy, in baptism as a means of regeneration, and in the eucharist as the means of salvation. Its most renowned leader, John Henry Newman, became a Roman Catholic.

Our British friends should be told that no one of us has ever seen the slightest evidence of the existence of such a Unitarian movement over here. Nor has the Unitarian Christian Fellowship ever been entangled with or had the remotest resemblance to the Buchman Group Movement.

Dr. Broome also writes that "to many of the more conservative, or 'rightist' members of our fellowship, the term 'humanism' is correlative with atheism, or, at best, agnosticism." And yet in the Autumn issue of the **Humanist** (p. 150) its new managing editor, Mr. Paul Kinney, writes: "I am an atheist . . . I am an agnostic . . . I am of course a freethinker. . . . Now if a combination atheist-agnostic-freethinker-rationalist-Unitarian can join the humanists. . . . Humanist is the inclusive term for all boosters of human happiness here and now."

In view of such confessions coming from that quarter, Dr. Broome is scarcely accurate in blaming the "more conservative" for labelling the humanists atheists or agnostics.

Finally, Dr. Broome makes a specific reference to this publication. As he reads **Our Faith** he cannot understand why the members of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship "seek to remain as ecclesiastical bedfellows with those who represent such marked differences."

In other words, he thinks it odd that we should want to remain within the American Unitarian Association. But what Dr. Broome has failed to observe, or at least failed to mention, is that on the title-page of every issue of **Our Faith** to date the stated purpose is identical with the purpose of the

American Unitarian Association itself, as stated in the first paragraph of its By-Laws. No true report of American Unitarianism should fail to notice the harmony between the Association's purpose and that of **Our Faith.**

The Future of Unitarianism

PROF. RICHARD C. BABSON
(Utopia College, Eureka, Kansas)

"When we mean to build, we must first survey the plot and then draw the model." (Shakespeare, in KING HENRY IV).

Those of us who have been interested in the Unitarian Church over a period of years are conscious of its great history, its liberal traditions, and its inspiring leadership. Today we are confused and have great doubts as to just what is our objective as a Church. Some of us have come to the cross roads and must decide our future church affiliations. It is essential, therefore, that we stop and try to get our bearings in the present situation in which we find ourselves surrounded by a heavy fog.

In the past when a person became associated with a Unitarian Church, he knew definitely that he was joining a Church of God, a sacred institution, which was dedicated to a Love of the Truth in the spirit of Jesus who was a divinely inspired human being, and which supplied a place to worship God and provided leadership for service to mankind.

Today we are told by certain of our leaders, both ministers and laymen, that this is now superfluous and that "Central to Unitarianism is the principle of the Free Mind." It is the interpretation of this principle of the Free Mind that has brought both the Universalist and Unitarian Churches to the most critical point in their histories. In the Unitarian Church today there is a constanly increasing feeling of disunity and lack of objective.

Perhaps one of our greatest laymen of all time was the late Dr. Charles W. Eliot, who was the President of Harvard University for forty years. A thought which was expressed by this great Harvard President and thinker is worth giving our most careful consideration in our present dilemma. Dr. Eliot said, and I quote, "The foundation of real religious unity seems to me to be identity of aim—the cultivation of love to God and man—and not identity of beliefs, rites, sacraments, and organizations which are but means." With these words, Dr. Charles W. Eliot expressed the liberal Unitarian thought of the past. Can the principle of the Free Mind assume a superior place above God who is the Father of all mankind and the Source of all conquering Love, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Justice?

Can the Unitarian Church survive under a leadership which reasons that a brand of atheistic humanism is proper within this liberal Church of God of the past?

We do not believe that it can possibly survive, half for God in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, and half against Him.

In the spring of 1947 Dr. Samuel Eliot, in addressing the Unitarian Laymen's League, pointed out that the Unitarian Church needed and wanted militant churchmen. Yes, and it needs first as a source of inspiration to militant churchmen a militant religious leadership which will not quit, and will not lack the courage to fight for "the cultivation of a love to God and to man" with all its hearts, with all its minds, and with all of its combined strength.

The Unitarian Church of the future must have a definite objective to which both ministers and laymen can give their whole-hearted support. As a basis for thought, the writer suggests that the Unitarian Church of the future work unstintingly and without any reservations for the following objectives:

1) To foster ideals of political, economic, and social democracy with a spirit of reverence for God, and of brotherhood with Jesus and our fellow men.

2) To give whole-hearted support to the Inter Faith movement which aims to promote justice, understanding, amity, and cooperation between the people of different religious faiths.

3) To give enthusiastic support to all projects for the betterment of human lives in the community, state, and nation, and to promote good will in our international relations.

4) To promote church attendance and strive for the growth and general welfare of a united Unitarian Church.

The day of decision is here. As a Church,

we are for God or we are against Him. There can be no equivocation or mental reservation. Let's all get into the same boat and pick up our oars to pull our way through the channel of progress under the guidance of that great Helmsman who taught that, "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Lay Steadfastness

CONSTANT WENDELL

(President, Edward Everett Hale Chapter of the Laymen's League, First Church, Boston)

In these days, when there is so much controversy about religion, we Unitarian Laymen will do well to remember how often, in the Old Testament, brave souls have come forward urging their countrymen to remain steadfast to the faith of their fathers. For today, even as in the days of old, there are those who would lead us away from the faith of our fathers, and we must be on our guard against the machinations of these "false prophets."

When such dissenters come amongst us we must tell them exactly where we stand. We must warn them that our churches are —first, last, and always, **Christian** churches —churches founded for, dedicated to, and ever conscious of, the sacred task of leading men, women, and children towards the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

Let us not hide our light under a bushel. Rather let it shine forth so that all men, everywhere, may see our good works, for our Church is founded upon the rock of ages and cannot be shaken.

The whole world should know that the primary theme of Unitarianism is founded on that priceless heritage of faith which has come to us straight from the heart of Jesus Christ and that, while we are glad to share him with others, it is we who have prior claim upon him as the founder of our faith and high priest of our Church.

Let our churches, like a gentle mother, wary of the welfare of her children, draw us close, tell us the story of the Christ-Child, teach us the way and the life, make us better children: more worthy of that holy kinship with our Heavenly Father.

Yes, my friends, we must remain steadfast to the faith of our fathers.

Humanisn and Theism

CHARLES C. GIRELIUS

(Minister, The Reformed Christian Church, Barneveld, N. Y.)

Humanism emphasizes human values, and it rightly protests against anything that shackles the spirit of man. It asserts that religion is for man, and not man for religion, as Jesus plainly taught in his interpretation of the Sabbath. Humanism denies that the chief end of man is to glorify God—true enough, for God does not need to be glorified. It declares that man's great end is the enhancement of the human estate and the building of noble personality within the framework of human unity.

But there is no reason why we may not have a religion that retains all the passionate interest in human welfare that the humanist urges, and at the same time cherish faith in that power for good that we know as God. The humanist gives us a man-centered idealism, while the theist adds to that a God-encompassing faith. Humanism is incomplete without God. We live in a universe charged with life and power, intelligences and purpose, a world of known and unknown forces in which man lives, moves and has his being. A world so great, so meaningful, so obviously permeated with an indwelling life was indeed made for man. Jesus anticipated the humanists when he called God **Father;** we have a humanist universe with God as its Supreme Humanist! Our religion takes in all the values of both Humanism and Theism with a faith that is both man-centered and God-encircling.

Are Unitarians Ashamed?

JOHN CLARENCE PETRIE

(Minister, First Unitarian Church, Houston, Texas)

Just a few years ago the AUA made me a present of the last few remaining copies of James Freeman Clarke's classic catechism, "Manual of Unitarian Belief." The explanation was that there was no call for it any more, and as I seemed to be running a mid-Victorian parish I was welcome to it. I called attention to the Unitarian pamphlets listed at the end of each chapter and added that when I asked the AUA for copies of these the answer was "Permanently out of print." This slogan covered the absence from our pamphlet literature

of such outstanding numbers as "Emerson" by W. C. Gannett; "Martineau" by C. G. Howland; "A History of Unitarianism" by Charles Graves; and Channing's Baltimore Sermon. The little card with the famous Five Points of Unitarian belief was also out of print.

Since Unitarian Christianity is the only form of Unitarianism that deserves the name, this meant that I was sorely handicapped in providing my congregation with authoritative Unitarian teaching. I planned for my mid-week Lenten class of 1947 to give a series of discussion lectures based on the Baltimore Sermon. I wanted copies of the address in the hands of the people. That was when I learned it was out of print. Just the other day I again put in an order and had a note from Boston saying my order was being held up until it was certain that I knew I was ordering a pamphlet now on sale at 25 cents per copy. This for the basic document of our movement!

Another plan I had was to have the Houston church buy copies of the one volume edition of Channing's complete works to place in the hands of each new member. I was told at our headquarters that this, too, was out of print permanently. Instead an anthology of Channing was being printed at $5.00 a volume. So instead of being able to go directly to the words of the founder of American Unitarianism we must now read selections chosen by someone who might be an admirer of Channing but who certainly was not qualified to do our reading for us. I would as soon accept Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," or Pierce's "Soul of the Bible" as substitutes for the texts of the bard and the Bible.

I recall with gratitude that when I was received into our fellowship, the policy was to supply the incoming ministers with basic Unitarian literature. So it was I made my acquaintance with Channing, Martineau and Clarke. The Unitarian officials and policy makers of 1926 were apparently proud of Unitarianism's past and did their best to see that men educated in non-Unitarian seminaries had a chance to master the first principles and basic assumptions of the movement in this country.

Can it be possible that present leadership is out to liquidate Unitarianism's past? Can it be that a thorough reading of our past would show up the false slogans now appearing on Unitarian literature?

On Wilbur's Three Points

LESLIE T. PENNINGTON
(Minister, First Unitarian Church, Chicago, Ill.)

(From a recent calendar)

Much has been said and written of late concerning the three leading principles by which Earl Morse Wilbur has characterized Unitarianism from its earliest beginning: freedom, reason, and tolerance in religion. These are great principles. We need them. The world needs them. But behind them Dr. Wilbur sets a prior force out of which they sprang: "the element of deep personal devotion in many of the choice spirits of the medieval church." He cites specifically the type of Christian life presented in the **Imitation of Christ** and the **Theologia Germanica.** And the great days of our faith, as of all faith, have been the days when deep personal devotion burned within it like a white flame.

This is what we need today far more than strategy, promotion, ecclesiastical politics and campaigns.

Worth Quoting

(Selections from "Human Destiny" by Leconte de Nouy, suggested by Mrs. Audrey Mallen, Church of All Souls, New York City)

"Good is that which contributes to the course of ascending evolution and leads us away from the animal toward freedom.

"Evil is that which opposes evolution and escapes it by regressing toward the ancestral bondage—toward the beast.

"To believe in God is to desire his existence, and what is more, to act as though he existed.

"It is not the image we create of God which proves God. It is the effort we make to create this image."

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